

Gentle Nights

A teen filly alicorn resembling Nightmare Moon loosely is conjured mysteriously during a thunderstorm. Awakening cold and unwell, she wanders to find safety... and family. However, her pitch black coat and turquoise-colored eyes make ponies suspicious of her origins, even her own guardian.

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- >Be me, experiencing the first overwhelming moments of existence.
- >The air is cold and humid.
- >The ground is wet and sticky.
- >My hooves ache as though I've been walking for miles.
- >I have no recollection of walking at all.
- >Everything hurts...
- >I open my eyes and try to figure out where I am.
- >Something tells me gnarly trees hanging around me with no leaves and ragged bark is a bad sign.
- >I struggle to my sore hooves, and pant for breath.
- >My muscles shake with effort, like they can't hold my body weight.
- >I nearly slip on the muddy ground, but I hold myself steady by spreading my wings.
- >I call instinctively upon my magic, and the area around me illuminates with light purple light.
- >I am an alicorn, and something tells me that's not... good? Somehow.
- >I tuck my wings to my sides and steadily walk through the clearing. There's no lights besides from my horn.
- >The sky is overcast, there is no moon and no stars to guide me.
- >I am alone. So very alone...
- >I pick a direction and walk, hoping that it'll be towards civilization... Others like me.
- >It isn't long before I see a distant warm light.
- >I use a burst of speed to gallop towards the lights, but I slip after only a few hoofbeats.
- >I land on the mud and cry out as I land on a wing awkwardly.
- >Gods, I hope I didn't just break it!
- >I hiss with pain and begin to cry pitifully.
- >Something told me I shouldn't cry.
- >I cry for a while, before a strange creaking sound perks my ears.
- >"Hello?"
- >A soft voice calls out, and I rasp wearily,
Here... Help...
- >I sniffle and rest my head on a hoof as the warm light brightens.
- >A butter yellow pegasus mare with a luxurious long pink mane and tail emerges, and she gasps at the sight of me.
- >My gut feeling regarding being an alicorn turned out to be correct, but the other pony does not run.
- >The pegasus walks up to me shyly and looks at my injured wing.
- >"Oh, you poor filly! Can you stand?"
- >Filly? Am I a filly to her? Something deep within me wants to berate and shout over such a name, but I don't want to! She seems so nice!
- "M-Maybe..."
- >I try to stand to my hooves, and mostly succeed.
- >She talks, but I don't quite listen. She asks for a name, but I cannot bring myself to speak.
- >My injured wing hangs limply off of my side and brushes along the mud as she escorts me into

her quaint cottage.

>It's... so warm. My eyes feel heavy as she grabs a towel and begins to dry my dark periwinkle mane.

>I lay upon her couch at her signal, closing my eyes slowly over the course of minutes.

>By time she's beginning to set my wing, I lose consciousness entirely...

2

>Waking up this time is much more comfortable.

>I open my eyes to see a cottage interior bathed in warm morning light.

>I yawn and shift, feeling my damaged wing bound up in a makeshift cast.

>So I had broken it after all...

>I sit up and look around from my position on the couch.

>The cottage is full of decorations befitting a modest lifestyle.

>This house belongs to somepony who loves animals, judging by the occupied indoor bird houses, buckets of animal feed and a lone white rabbit glaring at me.

"Uh-"

>The white rabbit sneers and hops away, kicking up a small amount of rug dust in my direction as he leaves.

>Confused, I try a hoof onto the floor. It doesn't hurt as badly as it had the night before.

>I stand up fully and look around the cottage for my savior.

>It doesn't take my nose long to realize where the mare is. The pleasing scent of batter cooking leads me to the kitchen.

>I clear my throat and speak. My voice is still husky and deep, but it has a youthful ring to it.

>Something about the youthful part takes me aback.

>I... wasn't supposed to be this way, right?

"Hello...?"

>"Oh! You're awake!"

>The pegasus mare seems overjoyed, and flips a pancake onto a plate before she approaches me gingerly.

>"Are you feeling okay?"

"I'm okay, thanks..."

>She sighs with relief and smiles shyly.

>"My name is Fluttershy... I found you outside of my cottage last night..."

"Th-Thanks for the save, Fluttershy."

>"My pleasure... Um, I made breakfast. You should sit down and eat..."

>I nod and look to the small dining table.

>I take a seat and get comfortable as she brings me a plate of pancakes, complete with berries, syrup and whipped cream.

>I don't realize how hungry I am until I ravenously bite into the first forkful of food.

>After a few more bites, Fluttershy speaks softly.

>"Do you know who you are? Maybe you can give me, um, a name, now that you're rested?"

>Oh crap! A name? I draw up a blank on that.

"...I don't... have one."

>Fluttershy squeaks and gasps sadly. I flinch.

>"You poor thing... Do you remember anything at all?"

>I try my best, but nothing comes to mind from before waking up in the strange forest.

"N...No"

>"Okay... Um..."

>Fluttershy seems to think hard for a minute as I continue to eat my food.
>It isn't until I am nearly finished that she speaks again.
>"Well, um... You need a name, at least... Let me think..."
>I shrug and poke at the last of my food, a slight ball twisting in my stomach.
>I feel wrong. Like... like I shouldn't be here, somehow.
>Like I... Something terrible must have happened, for me to forget everything from before...
>I feel tears welling in my eyes, and before I know it, they're falling.
>Fluttershy seems to notice.
>"Oh dear... It's alright, you're going to be okay! Here-"
>She walks over and hoofs me a clean tissue. I dab my eyes with it and sniffle pathetically.
"I'm sorry..."
>Fluttershy pulls me into a tight hug, and I nearly break again. Why was she being so nice...?
>It's a long while before she lets go and we resume eating our breakfast... I still feel wrong, but like a weight had been lifted.
>When we finally finish is when Fluttershy speaks again.
>"Does Asra sound... nice?"
"Asra...?"
>"It... means somepony who travels at night... I think it's fitting..."
>I feel a smile tug at my muzzle, and I nod fervently.
"It's perfect."

>Fluttershy was many things, but she wasn't stupid.
>The appearance was uncanny.
>Only the rounded pupils, fluffy dark periwinkle mane, and awkward proportions of a pubescent filly were throwing her off of being a true queen of the night...
>Asides from some similarities, however... The teen filly hardly acted like Nightmare Moon.
>She was at a loss, especially when the doppelganger began to cry. Truly cry!
>Fluttershy's kind heart broke for the confused young filly.
>So she decided as she held the poor thing in her hooves that she would do everything she could to get to the bottom of things.